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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001109

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DEPARTMENT, PLEASE PASS USAID

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TAGS: PREL EAID SO USEU BRUSSELS

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - IGAD DEPLOYMENT PLAN: EU RESPONSE

REF: SECSTATE 47850

Classified By: PRMOFF MARC J. MEZNAR. REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

11. (C) The EU broadly shares U.S. concerns over the IGAD peacekeeping plan. However, it prefers a low-profile approach which allows the plan to collapse under its own weight for lack of Somali support. The EU will not fund any peacekeeping operation that includes troops from frontline states. The EU views the current peace process as a window of opportunity and hopes the U.S. will join in providing assistance to solidify gains and rebuild the country. End Summary.

EU Council: Shares U.S. Concerns

12. (C) On March 17, PRMOFF discussed points contained in reftel with the Head of the EU Council's Africa Task Force Koen Vervaeke and with DG Development Somalia Desk Officer Michele Cervone. Vervaeke said that the EU has yet to react publicly to the IGAD plan, but that Member States expressed many of the same concerns raised in reftel during the COAFR working group in mid-February. Vervaeke said that at a PSC meeting on March 15, the EU agreed on the following four points:

-- No action can be taken until there is full agreement by the transitional government for the IGAD plan;
-- Although Ethiopia's interest is understandable, it cannot be part of the peacekeeping force; however, Ethiopians could work on outside activities, such as planning support;
-- Sudan cannot be part of the peacekeeping force; and,
-- Better communication is needed among the principal actors (i.e., IGAD, AU, the Somali factions, and the CMC).

13. (C) Vervaeke said that on March 16 the EU had received planning documents for the IGAD peacekeeping mission. However, the plans contained many problems, including the inclusion of frontline states, no clarity of mandate and unclear relationship between IGAD and the AU. For these reasons, the EU is nowhere near ready to discuss financing options for any peacekeeping mission.

14. (C) Vervaeke expressed optimism over the possibility of peace in Somalia and said the EU would work hard to keep the opportunity alive. He said that both the European Commission (EC) and EU Council Secretariat would participate (at a working level) at the April 21 meeting of the CMC.

EC: Interested in U.S. strategy

5, (C) Cervone repeated many of the points made by Vervaeke, but with more emphasis on U.S. thinking and future contributions. He noted that while the EC shared many of the U.S.'s concerns about the IGAD plans, their strategy to move the peace process forward was different. Cervone said that the EC, as the largest donor to Somalia, had been engaged in quiet diplomacy for quite some time while the U.S. (as well as the EU Member States) have largely been absent from the scene. Instead of publicly saying "no" to peacekeeping troops from front-line states, the EC prefers this opinion be expressed by Somalis themselves. Cervone said that in order for the EC to provide any funds for peacekeeping, the request must have the support of all factions in Somalia, as well as endorsement from the AU and the UN.

16. (C) Cervone said that the EC expected the IGAD plan to wither away and the Hawiye Plan put forth by the Parliament to gather steam. He noted that the draft IGAD plan received in Brussels on March 16 was unfeasible, both for political and technical reasons. Cervone mentioned that the "strong" U.S. statement regarding IGAD came as a "small bomb" in the IGAD meeting and may have hardened the Ethiopian stance.

17. (C) DG Development Director for East, South and the Horn of Africa Anders Henriksson will be in Washington March 21-22 for discussions with the Department on a variety of issues, including Somalia. Cervone said this will be a good opportunity to hear more from the U.S. regarding its vision, political strategy and funding sources for solidifying peace

in Somalia.

EC: Robust assistance program

18. (C) According to Cervone, the EC has had no problem disbursing the approximately 50 million euros per year that it has earmarked for Somalia. (Note. Unlike most other African countries, the EC can make decisions without consulting Somali authorities or gaining their approval for lack of a full-fledged, functioning government. End note.) This year's priorities include training police and supporting the reconciliation process. The EC has also earmarked 5 million euros, channeled through UNDP, to help relocate the government. Cervone said that the CMC, a mini-donor roundtable, is expected to take place in late April to garner financial support for the relocation project and related security expenses.

19. (C) Cervone also said the EC looks forward to U.S. participation at the large donor conference that is scheduled to take place in Rome at the end of this year, where the World Bank and UN needs assessments will be presented to the donors.

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